4/28/71

Dear Mr. Durkin,

Again my thanks for the advance of the NYTimes nastiness. Rather than simply sending John Leonard a letter, I think I'll respond in a form that might get used elsewhere as a story. Wolff is simply wrong, and I am inclined to think not by accident, for about three or four months ago, unless my recollection is in error, one of the publishers, who knows him, said he spoke to him and he confirmed.

I was leaving town for several days when I got your letter and other mail at the post office.

As a matter of fact, it is much worse than I said in that footnote. The cue, I think, is in Wolff's "getting me off the hook line". It was Wiggins who told Wolff not to review any of the books (for by then others were known to be forthcoming), for essentially the reasons Wolff states. My history with Wiggins and others at the Post is interesting, too. I think I have rather complete notes and letters, and when I get home I'll read the letter with care and then check these files. My wife read that to me as I was driving.

Has it begun to dawn on you that, as I once told you, you cannot fit me into those neat political cubbyholes you prefer? Can it be more obvious that the "liberals" do not like me or my work?

What I have in mind is addressing some of the others, too, like Gertz and Barkham. Do you know anything about Barkham's politcis, if any? I wrote him through the Post, got an indignant nothingness, responded pointedly, and he has been silent. As has the Post. I asked that my response be forwarded to the syndicate. No response. From either, both asked.

Thanks also for the Freep stuff. Somebody gave me a subscription to it about three years ago, maybe more, and I found it unappetizing. The uncritical ballyhoo doesn't change my low opinion of them. What is surprising is the Kirkwood review. He is what I think you would call a liberal, as he (meaning Shaw) does. One report that reached me, and I have neither confirmation nor interest in it, is that the wealth New Orleans liberals, led by Mrs. Elizabeth Stern, from one of the wealthy New York families, owner of the WDSU combo, etc. helped finance Shaw's defense and subsidized Kirkwood. I do not suggest that either, if true, is wrong. I believe I've also heard of read that she is suing to get her political contributions (against Garrison) ruled exempt under the tax laws on the ground they serve her economic interests.

I believe I sent you a copy of my first letter to Leonard. Since then I've learned more of Kaplan's government connections. He has just done a study for USIA. Angela Davis case.

Others, I suppose, will join the gangup. But to this moment I've seen no serious criticism of the content of the book, nor has there been a single complaint from any of those discussed in any critical way. Even Hanes, on TV, acknowledged I underestimated the extent of his mercenary interests and said I'm foolish for not sharing them. That, I suppose, is the great modern crime. To have principle dominate commercial instincts.

It has now been a month since I write Leonard. He, too, has been silent.

I appreciate your keeping me posted on these things. It is all part of the story of the era of political assassinations, for without a corrupt press there could not have been what we have had since Kennedy's.

Sincerely,